

## LSOP 6.4.1 MEMBER SKILLS MAINTENANCE

Hornsby / Ku-Ring-Gai

September 2023

ITEM	DESCRIPTION
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SOPs	Nil
Owner	District Manager
Contact	Officer responsible for Learning & Development
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### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 Most of the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) mainstream training courses are competency based with an indefinite shelf life. To ensure the safety of all members, the District supports the use of structured competency maintenance activities by brigades as part of the districts approach to operational readiness and to support members to demonstrate currency in accordance with training and assessment strategies.
- 1.2 This procedure outlines the recommended minimum skills maintenance activities for all operational and operational support members (firefighters and all ranked officers) as part of a skills maintenance program.

### 2. Procedure

- 2.1 Annual skills maintenance activities can be undertaken all year round with the aim to have skills maintenance completed by as many members as possible prior to the bush fire danger period. Skills maintenance activities can be demonstrated through a range of operational activities – including, incidents, hazard reductions, exercises, district training and brigade training.
- 2.2 All skills maintenance activities should be undertaken in line with skills cards (where applicable) or other current RFS training doctrine.
- 2.3 The emphasis of these activities is about refreshing skills – not about determining competence (as this has already been completed with each member through a formal training and assessment program). Where a capability gap is identified in a skill, it is incumbent on the

brigade to provide the refresher training needed to bring the member back up to standard within as shorter time as possible.

- 2.4 The annual skills maintenance is targeted at operational members that perform duties either on or away from a fire ground. The minimum skills maintenance activity for operational members is outlined in clauses 2.5. These are the minimum recommended skills maintenance activities. Brigades may include additional skills maintenance activities where there is an identified need.
- 2.5 The minimum skills for a firefighter (operational member) to complete as annual skills maintenance includes:
  - Safety including IMSAFER, LACES, and PPC/E.
  - Fire behaviour including fire triangle, weather, and topography.
  - Use of radio's including PSN, fireground, and radio procedures.
  - Appliance and portable pump operations including drafting, delivery, and hose bowling / rolling.
  - Hand tools including maintenance and use.
  - Fire overrun drill.
  - Teamwork.
- 2.6 Completion of skills maintenance activities must be documented using the checklist in appendix 1 with these records to be maintained by the Brigade.
- 2.7 Members should undertake these maintenance activities with their brigade. Where this is not reasonably practical to complete skills maintenance with their own brigades, members may be able to be accommodated within other brigades or can request to be accommodated to undertake skills maintenance activities in parallel with a district training course on request of their brigade captain.

### 3. Links

- [BF and BFS skill cards](#)
- [BF and BFS training manual](#)
- [Service Standard 6.1.2 Qualifications for NSW RFS Members](#)

### 4. Who is responsible for implementing this Procedure?

- Brigade Captains and Training Officers
- District Senior Leadership Team
- District Manager

### 5. Amendments

- This document replaces Hornsby Ku-ring-gai local standard operating procedure 6.4.1 currency in skill sets V1.0

# APPENDIX 1 – BRIGADE ANNUAL SKILLS MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

[illegible]

Annual skills maintenance record for

Brigade.

Year:

Brigade Training Officer: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Captain: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Annual Skills Maintenance Activities

All activities to be completed by each crew member to required standard, within acceptable timeframe, in accordance with NSW RFS policies and procedures.

### Safety

	Candidate defines the components of IMSAFER & LACES.
	Candidate has appropriate PPC/E and is wearing it correctly.
	Candidate demonstrates the correct lifting procedure for heavy equipment e.g. large fuel container.
	Candidate demonstrates correct hand signals for hose operations.
	Candidate safely guides the driver of a reversing vehicle through a turning or parking maneuver using hand signals (optional – brigade discretion to include).

### Fire Behaviour

	Fuel is a factor that contributes to fire behavior - explain some characteristics.
	Weather is a factor that contributes to fire behaviour- explain some characteristics.
	Topography is a factor that contributes to fire behaviour- explain some characteristics.
	Candidate can demonstrate awareness of how to identify intensifying fire behaviour, and how that may affect firefighting techniques.
	Explain the effect spot fires have on fire spread and firefighter safety.
	Candidate can identify the parts of a bushfire.
	Candidate can identify what the “Dead man zone” is, and how it affects firefighting techniques.

### Radios

	Locates fire ground radios and inspects and tests they are operational.
	Candidate demonstrates changing radio channels on fire ground radio as directed.
	Locates in-vehicle and portable PSN radios and Appliance Status Panel / mobile data terminal, and verifies they are operational.
	Candidate demonstrates changing volume, radio zones and channels on vehicle PSN radio.
	Candidate demonstrates changing volume, radio zones and channels on portable PSN radio.
	Through a radio transmission exercise, the candidate demonstrates correct PSN radio protocol with appropriate use of call signs, priority colour codes, phonetic words, standard phrases and general communications etiquette.
	Candidate gives radio message in concise and clear tones.
	Candidate identifies the meaning of each button on the Appliance Status Panel / Mobile Data Terminal.

### Drafting and Pump Operations

	Candidate can explain the function of the gauges and indicators on the main pump. Explains: e.g. “this is the compound gauge; it measures pressure coming into the pump. This is the pressure gauge; it measures pressure going out of the pump. This is the primer; it removes air from the pump inlet...”
	Candidate can setup water supply for pump using tank, hydrant and static water supply.
	Candidate can start and run pump at appropriate pressure, using primer as necessary.
	Candidate demonstrates appropriate communication techniques with crew through use of radios and hand signals to coordinate appropriate pump operation.
	Candidate can demonstrate water delivery to delivery lines as directed.
	Make up and re-stow equipment.

### Delivery Lines

	Locate and obtain water delivery equipment - hoses, branches, breeches, foam, etc.
	Candidate demonstrates the correct setup of equipment as directed, taking into account any hazards.
	Candidate demonstrates an awareness of protecting evidence of fire and area of fire origin.
	Candidate demonstrates appropriate communication techniques through use of radios and hand signals to coordinate appropriate delivery to delivery line.
	Recover, make ready and re-stow equipment.

### Portable Pump

	Candidate locates and carries the pump and associated equipment safely using 2-person lift.
	Checks the pump fuel, oil, prime, etc.
	Connect associated supply and delivery line equipment to pump in preparation for use.
	Start and test pump's operation.
	Communicates with team members to coordinate appropriate pump operation.
	Recover, make ready and re-stow equipment.

### Hand Tools

	Locates and obtains relevant equipment (rake hoe / McLeod tool, brush hook, axe, etc.).
	Inspects and tests equipment is fit for purpose.
	Demonstrate safe handling procedures, hazards and considerations for hand tools.
	Demonstrate maintenance procedures for care of hand tools.
	Cut a suitable trail for a control line demonstrating both the "Step Up" and "One Lick" methods.
	Equipment is stored ready for reuse.

### Overrun Drill

	Candidate describes the role/responsibilities of all team members in an overrun.
	During an overrun drill, candidate shifts from a normal operational situation to an emergency situation, by shifting to overrun tasks.
	Candidate demonstrates appropriate setup of equipment for overrun – e.g., pump on, attack line valves off, canvas attack lines disconnected, tank water level sight tube valves off, etc.
	Candidate demonstrates appropriate crew position in cabin.
	Candidate operates vehicle aircon, headlights, siren and beacons.
	Candidate uses / operates other protection measures as appropriate e.g., cabin spray bars, blankets and reflective screens.
	Candidate dons PPC/PPE correctly for overrun situation.
	Candidate openly communicates with other team members.
	Candidate effectively manages communication to Firecom of emergency situation.
	Candidate re-stows equipment onto appliance or original location in a fit and ready state.
	Candidate describes considerations for overrun drill in the open.

### General Teamwork

#### **Works as part of a team sharing information, knowledge and asking for assistance as required.**

	Candidate acknowledges receipt of verbal instructions and completes tasks correctly as allocated.
	Seeks clarification as required.
	Works collaboratively with other team members to achieve common outcome.
	Participates in post-scenario debrief.
	Candidate acknowledges feedback of own and team's goals and outcomes.

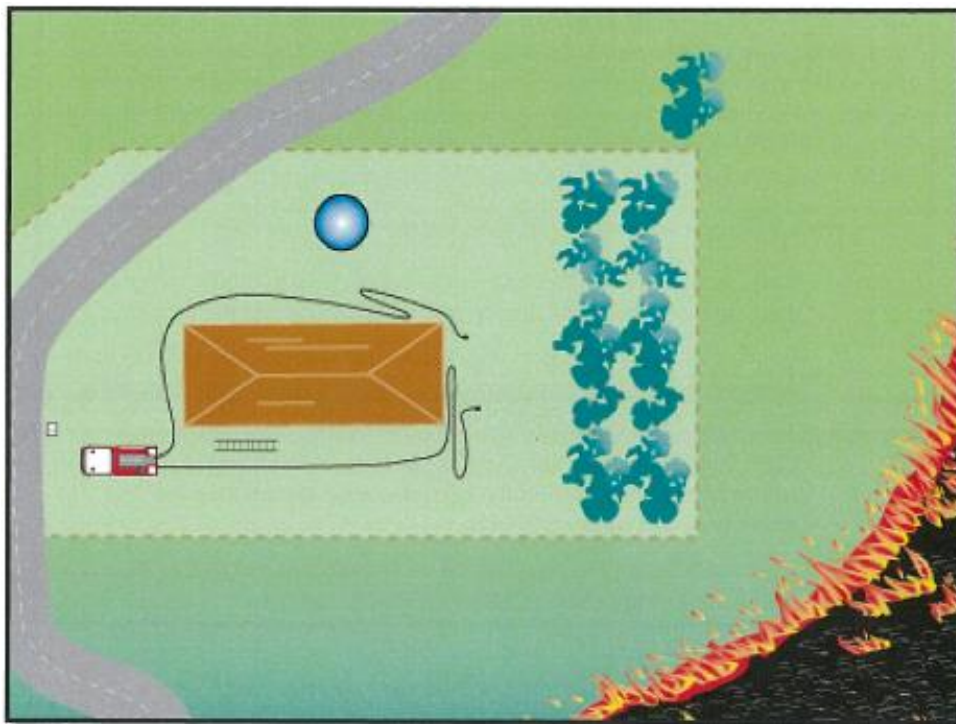
# APPENDIX 2 – BRIGADE ANNUAL SKILLS MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

## Hornsby Ku-ring-gai District

These practical sessions can be used to assess a number of the annual skills maintenance activities. Whilst there are 2 examples provided (that together assess all aspects of operational skills maintenance activities), you can adapt or change the sessions to suit your local environment.

### Scenario 1

Property protection (refer diagram example). Initial response to property protection. A large fire front is travelling towards the building's location. Crew will be tasked to setup for property protection and fire suppression. Candidates to suppress the fire using an appropriate attack method and watch for spot fire and ember attack (use witches hats to represent spot fires). The number of appliances used, and lines required will depend on the space available within the local area, and the number of crew participating in the exercise.



As the scenario progresses, the crew leader advises that on-board water levels are running low, and water is to be sourced from an alternate static water supply. The SWS can be a nearby creek or dam if available, alternatively a pre-filled 44-gallon drum. Crew to setup the portable pump to supply the appliance with water. At some point during the exercise, an Emergency alarm should be sounded and an overrun drill executed.

Once fire has been deemed to be extinguished. Crew to make up and refill appliance.

Skills Checks: Safety - Fire Behaviour - Radios – Drafting and pump operations - Delivery Lines - Portable Pump - Overrun Drill - General Teamwork

## Scenario 2

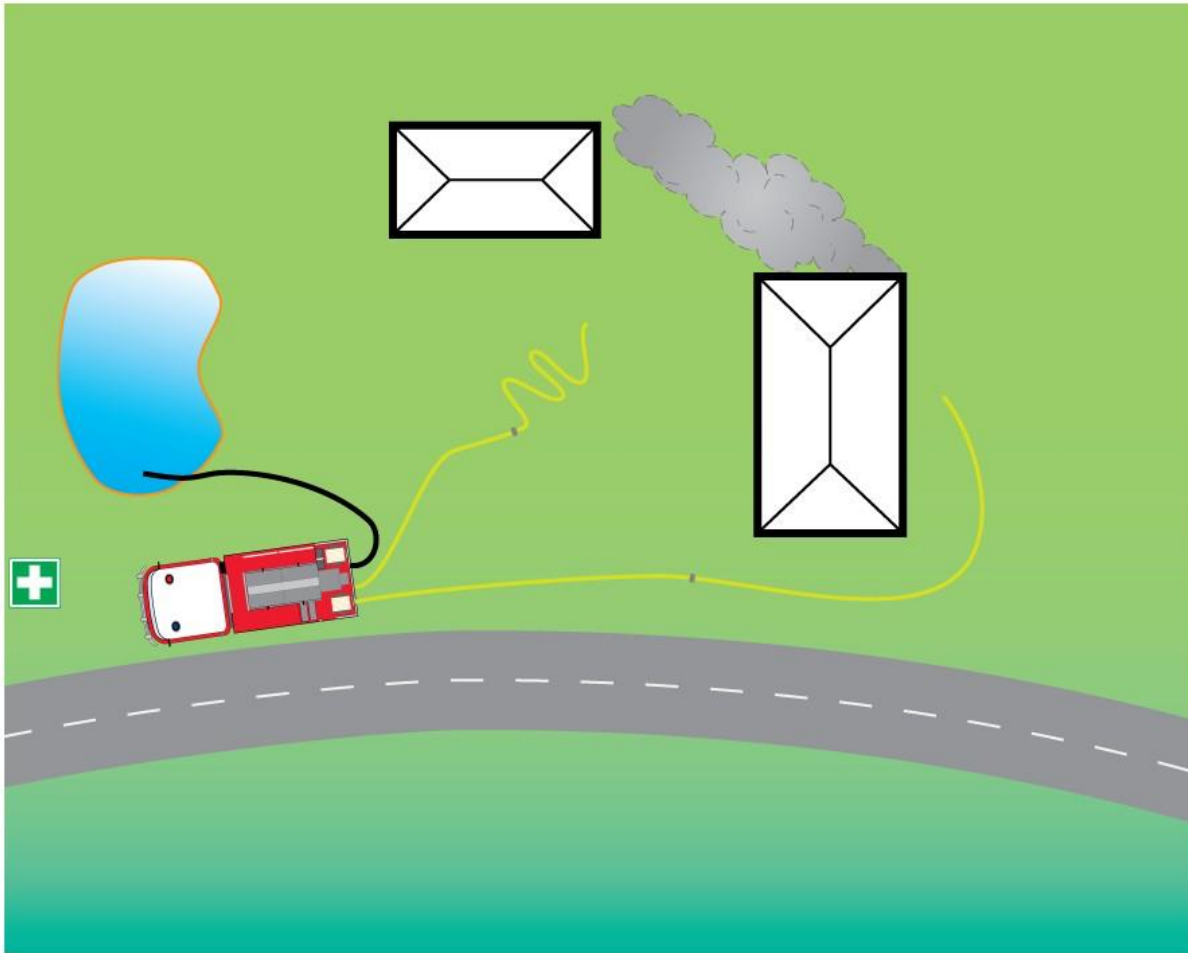
The crew is instructed to put in a firebreak/hand tool line at a particular location. To achieve this, they will need to use a variety of hand tools (McLeod tool, brush hook, etc.) and clear a line XXX meters long and XXX meters wide. Instruct the crew to utilise either the “Step Up”, or “One Lick” method of cutting a line - whatever is appropriate for the scenario. All equipment used should be inspected and tested by the crew before use.



Skills Checks: Safety - Fire Behaviour - Radios – Overrun drill in the open - General Teamwork



## Scenario 3 – VF Skills Set



You are going to work as part of a crew called to a structure fire. The crew will be briefed in the vehicle, or at an appropriate staging area. They need to be briefed by the Crew Leader as to what initial tasks are being assigned to each person. They need to be briefed to apply appropriate structural firefighting techniques and support activities. During the scenario, there will be a resident found collapsed near the door of the structure. The crew is only required to assist them from the building and place them in the first aid area/safety refuge area. The crew will be required to haul equipment to the roof of the structure (this can be simulated) and to use correct ladder and rope techniques. Crew will be required to prepare a water chute with a salvage sheet to be taken in to the structure and set up (crew to use water on ceiling and have chute funnel water outside). Crew will be required to switch roles within the exercise, and after successfully completing the tasks will be required to re-stow the equipment for further use. Tactical command of the crew is now handed to the Crew leader to deliver the scenario outcomes.



## Scenario 4 – VF Skills Set



Crews will be briefed by the Crew Leader as to what tasks are being assigned to each person. Before starting the scenario, the candidates must demonstrate checking the response vehicle ('tanker') and equipment, and identifying/reporting any issues found. The scenario starts in the response vehicle to allow demonstration of proceeding to a fire. During the assessment event, there will be a simulated spill of petrol, and correct spill equipment should be gathered and if possible, simulate the containment of the spill using an appropriate technique. Crew will be required to switch roles within the exercise. At the end of the scenario, equipment is to be restowed for future use.

Suggested tasks include: Search and Rescue the driver (who is already out of the vehicle); set up a 38mm attack line with a fog nozzle (minimum of two lengths); a first aid station; prepare any necessary entry tools, extinguisher and ancillary equipment (wheel chocks) A spill of petrol is occurring, and the crew will be required to use correct procedures to keep the ignition risk/environmental risk under control - fire. Crew are to undertake ancillary activities including assisting with damming water runoff, making up equipment and securing area. Crew Leader will indicate different equipment failures during firefighting (for example: hose line failure; radio failure; pump failure). Crew Members will be required to react to change in environment and fix as appropriate.

## **Scenario 5 – Skills Maintenance can be demonstrated at any of the following**

Skills maintenance activities can be demonstrated through a range of operational activities – including, incidents, hazard reductions, exercises, district training and brigade training.